

Practice

27 The following sentences are first, second or third conditional. Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form.

- 1 We wanted to go out yesterday but the weather was terrible. If it *had been* (be) a nice day, we *would have gone* (go) for a picnic.
- 2 Why don't you explain everything to him? If you (not tell) him the truth, I'm sure you (regret) it one day.
- 3 Jennifer was here not long ago. If you (come round) earlier, you (see) her.
- 4 Apparently, the ferry company are planning to close the port in this town. If that (happen), the town (lose) a great deal of money.
- 5 I (help) you with it if I (have) more time but I'm afraid I haven't got any spare time at all at the moment.
- 6 The government is expecting to win the next election, but if it (lose), the Prime Minister (resign) from politics.
- 7 I am so glad that you took me to your friend's party. If we (not go) there, I (never meet) Adrian.
- 8 It's ridiculous that trains are so expensive. If fares (be) cheaper, I'm sure more people (use) the train and leave their cars at home.
- 9 If she (get) that job she's applied for, she (be) delighted. And I think she's got a good chance of getting it.
- 10 Fortunately the explosion took place at night when the streets were empty. It (be) a disaster if it (happen) in the middle of the day.

- 11 The talks between the two leaders keep breaking down. If they (break down) again, it is possible that there (be) a war between the two countries.
- 12 If Alison (know) anything about car mechanics, I'm sure she (help) us fix the car, but I think she knows even less than we do.



- 13 They've been married for twenty years now but I don't think she (marry) him if she (know) what a selfish man he was.
- 14 Children spend too much time watching television and playing computer games. I'm sure they (be) happier if they (spend) more time playing outside.
- 15 Jamie has everything he wants but he's always moaning. I'm sure that if I (have) so much money, I (not moan) all the time.

28 Conditional sentences: variations in tenses

There are a number of variations in the tenses or verb forms that can be used in conditional sentences.

First conditional

The **if** clause is usually in the present simple. However, we can also use: present continuous, present perfect simple, present perfect continuous, **can**, **should**:

- If he's still **waiting** for you, he'll be very angry.
- If you're **coming out** with us tonight, you'll need to be ready by 7 o'clock.
- If Rob's **received** your letter, I'm sure he'll phone you today.
- If it's **been raining** in the night, you'll have to wear wellingtons.
- If I **can finish** work early, I'll come and help you.
- If I **should see** him, I'll tell him the good news.

Note: When we use **if** + **should**, the condition is less likely to be fulfilled.

The main clause usually has the verb in the future with **will/shall**. However, we can also use: 'be going to' future, future continuous, future perfect, imperative, **can/could**, **may/might**, **should/ought to**, **must**:

- If Helen passes all her exams, we're **going to buy** her a big present.
- If we book this holiday, we'll **be lying** on a warm beach in two weeks' time.
- If they win this next match, they'll **have won** every match in the season.
- If you need any help, **call** me.
- If you phone me after 12 o'clock, I **might be** in bed.
- If they don't eat their dinner, they **can't have** any ice-cream.

Second conditional

The **if** clause is usually in the past simple. However, we can also use the past continuous, **could**, or **were/was to**:

- If you **were coming** with me, I'd give you a lift.
- If I **could have** the day off, I'd come with you.
- If you **were to ask** Steve, I'm sure he would do it.

The main clause usually has the modal **would** + infinitive. However, the modals **could** and **might** are also used and the infinitive can be in the continuous form:

- If we had more money, we **wouldn't be living** here.
- If we had more money, we **could go out** more often.
- If you asked Tony, he **might do** it for you.

Third conditional

The **if** clause is usually in the past perfect simple. However, we can also use the past perfect continuous or **could** + perfect infinitive:

If he **had been travelling** in that car, he would have been killed too.
If we **could have** got a taxi, we would have come round to see you.

The main clause usually has the modal **would** + perfect infinitive. However, we can also use the modals **could** and **might** before the perfect infinitive:

If I had known there was no more work to do, I **could have stayed** in bed.
If the ambulance had come sooner, he **might have been saved**.

The zero conditional

If I **stay** out late, I always **get** a taxi home.
present simple present simple

To describe something that is generally true. The use of **if** here is very similar to **when**.

Each time I stay out late, I get a taxi home.

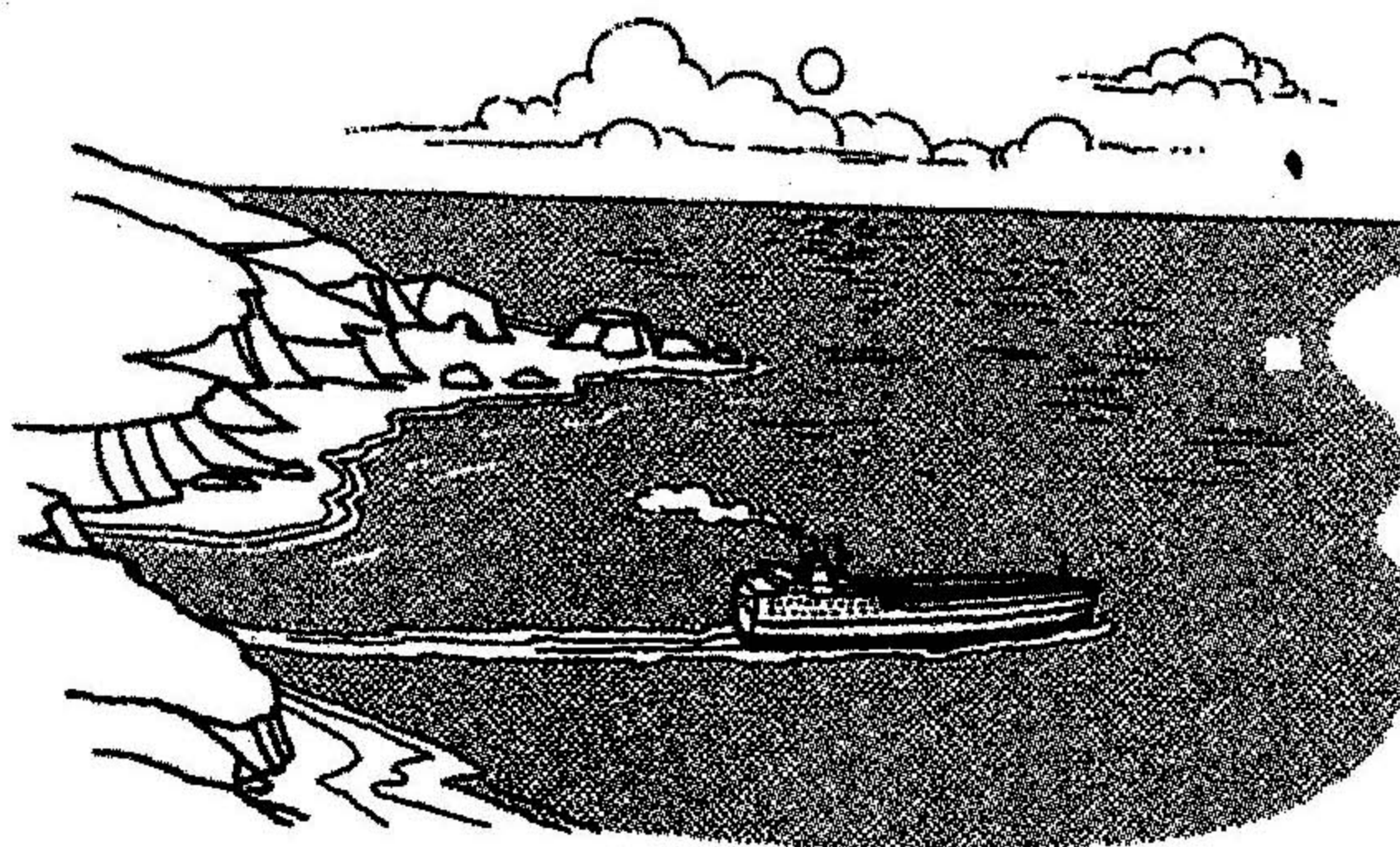
We can also use the past simple in the two clauses:
If I **stayed** out late, I always **got** a taxi home.

Practice

28 Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form.

- 1 Oh dear, I think we're a bit late. If the concert's already started, we won't be allowed. (not be allowed) to go in.
- 2 He wouldn't be coming here if he (not want) to.
- 3 If you were planning to leave your husband, I (advise) you against it.
- 4 He could be earning lots of money now if he really (want) to, but I don't think that's what he wants.
- 5 You can stay here tonight if you (not have) anywhere else to stay.
- 6 If I could have phoned you, I (tell) you what was happening.
- 7 If you (have) any problems, give me a ring.

- 8 If you (get) here at about 8 o'clock, I'll be waiting for you.
- 9 We could have got there in time if you (phone) us earlier.
- 10 If this should happen again, (come) and (tell) me about it immediately.
- 11 You can't expect kindness and support from your family if you (not give) the same to them.
- 12 If she's been working all day, she (be) very tired when she gets in.
- 13 If the management were to reinstate the strike leader, the strike (be called off).
- 14 If I (keep) working on this essay, I'll have finished it by tonight.
- 15 If I could borrow some money, I (definitely come) on the holiday with you, but I think it's unlikely.
- 16 I might have been able to help you if you (explain) the problem to me.
- 17 If I could live wherever I wanted to, I think I (choose) to live on a Scottish island.



- 18 If they had been listening more carefully, they (might understand) what I was saying.
- 19 If I (be) a year older, I could join the army.
- 20 If I (get) a pay rise, I'm going to buy a new car.

29 Mixed conditionals

In addition to all the tense variations that we can use in first, second and third conditionals, it is also possible to mix conditionals so that, for example, the **if** clause uses a verb form used in the first conditional and the main clause uses a verb form used in the third conditional. The context defines the meaning. The most common mixed conditional is:

3rd	2nd
if + past perfect	would/could/might + infinitive

Examples of mixed conditionals

3rd	2nd
If I had worked harder at university,	I would have a degree now.
1st	2nd
If you come to the party tomorrow,	I wouldn't bring Mike with you.
2nd	3rd
If she loved him,	she would have stayed with him.

Practice

29 Match the clauses and write the mixed conditional sentences in your notebook.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>1 If you had told me about this problem earlier,</p> <p>2 If you were a more sensitive person,</p> <p>3 If they don't contact you soon,</p> <p>4 If he hadn't died so young,</p> <p>5 If he didn't work so hard all the time,</p> <p>6 If the train hadn't been delayed,</p> <p>7 If he was feeling ill this morning,</p> <p>8 If you're coming with us,</p> <p>9 If I really wanted to have children,</p> <p>10 If you had worked harder last month,</p> | <p>A he probably won't be at the meeting.</p> <p>B you could always ring them up.</p> <p>C his wife would never have left him.</p> <p>D you wouldn't have said that to her.</p> <p>E I would have had them by now.</p> <p>F everything would be all right now.</p> <p>G would you hurry up and get ready?</p> <p>H you wouldn't be so busy this month.</p> <p>I we would be there by now.</p> <p>J I'm sure he'd be a famous musician by now.</p> |
|--|---|

Example:

1F – If you had told me about this problem earlier, everything would be all right now.

30 Conditionals

As you have seen, it is possible to use almost any combination of tenses in conditional sentences. The context determines the choice of tense.

Check

30 Put the verbs in brackets into the appropriate form.

1 Harry and Sarah, a husband and wife, are talking.

H: Shall I make the children something to eat?

S: I wouldn't bother. You know how much they eat when they visit their grandparents.

H: That's true. If they ¹ *have been eating* (eat) all afternoon, they
² (not want) anything when they get home.

S: Are we going to pick them up soon?

H: No, my parents are bringing them over. We agreed that if I
³ (take) them there, they
⁴ (bring) them back.

S: Oh good. Well, if we ⁵ (not collect) them, I ⁶ (go back) upstairs and do a bit more work. I've nearly finished that report now. If I
⁷ (do) another half hour's work, I
⁸ (finish) it by the time the children get home.

H: Why do you always have to bring work home with you? If you
⁹ (not agree) to take on that new job, you ¹⁰ (have) much more free time now.

S: Yes, and if I ¹¹ (not take on) that job, we ¹² (not have) much money now.

H: That's true, but I don't like you working so much.

S: Well never mind. We've got a week's holiday soon. Just think! In two weeks' time, we ¹³ (lie) on a warm sunny beach – that's if I ¹⁴ (can get) the time off work of course.

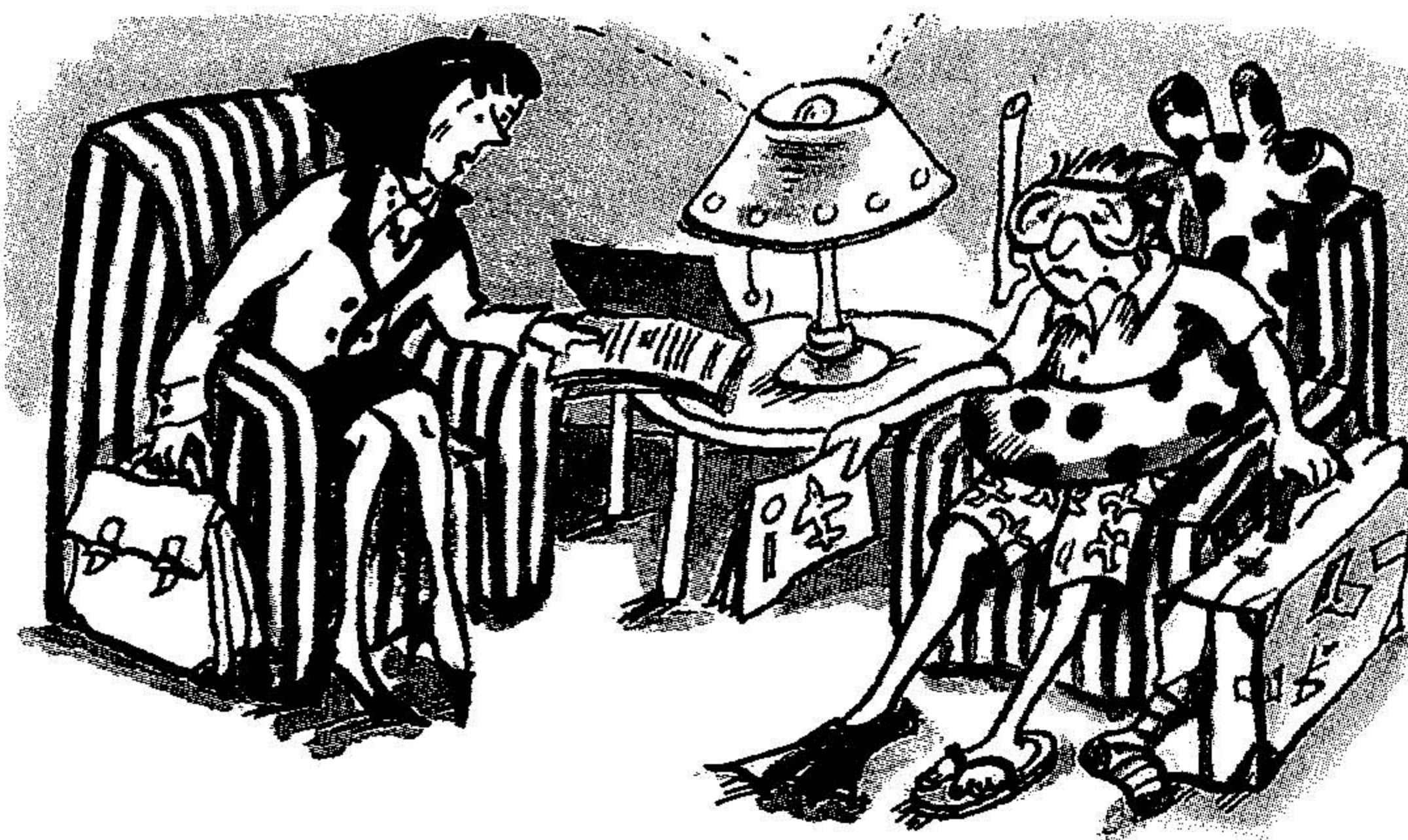
H: What do you mean, 'if'?

S: Well, everything's very busy at the moment. And if we

¹⁵ (get) any more orders, I just

¹⁶ (not see) how I can leave the office.

H: What? But that's ridiculous.



2 Dear Angela,

Thanks for your letter, it was nice to hear from you. And yes, I would like to come and see you in Spain. If I ¹⁷ (save up) enough money when the summer holidays start, I ¹⁸ (try) and come then – if that ¹⁹ (be) O.K. Otherwise, I'll come over in the autumn because I'm sure I

²⁰ (save up) enough by October – if I

²¹ (not lose) my job by then!

Unfortunately, lots of people in our company are being made redundant and it could be me next. If I ²² (have) any sense, I

²³ (leave) this job ages ago. Still it could be worse I suppose.

I was delighted to hear about your promotion – it's great news. If you

²⁴ (keep on) getting promoted, you

²⁵ (run) the whole school soon.

And it sounds like the weather's been really good over there. It's been terrible here. I don't think it's been dry once this month. If it ²⁶

..... (be) dry, I ²⁷

(not notice). Oh well, we're hoping it'll get better soon. If it

²⁸ (still rain) at the weekend, we

²⁹ (decide) we'll try and emigrate!
 Have you heard from Charlotte by the way? She said she was going to phone
 you to tell you that she's pregnant. If she ³⁰
 (not phone you up yet), ³¹ (not tell)
 her that I've already told you her news, will you?

All the best,

Jade

31 Words other than *if*

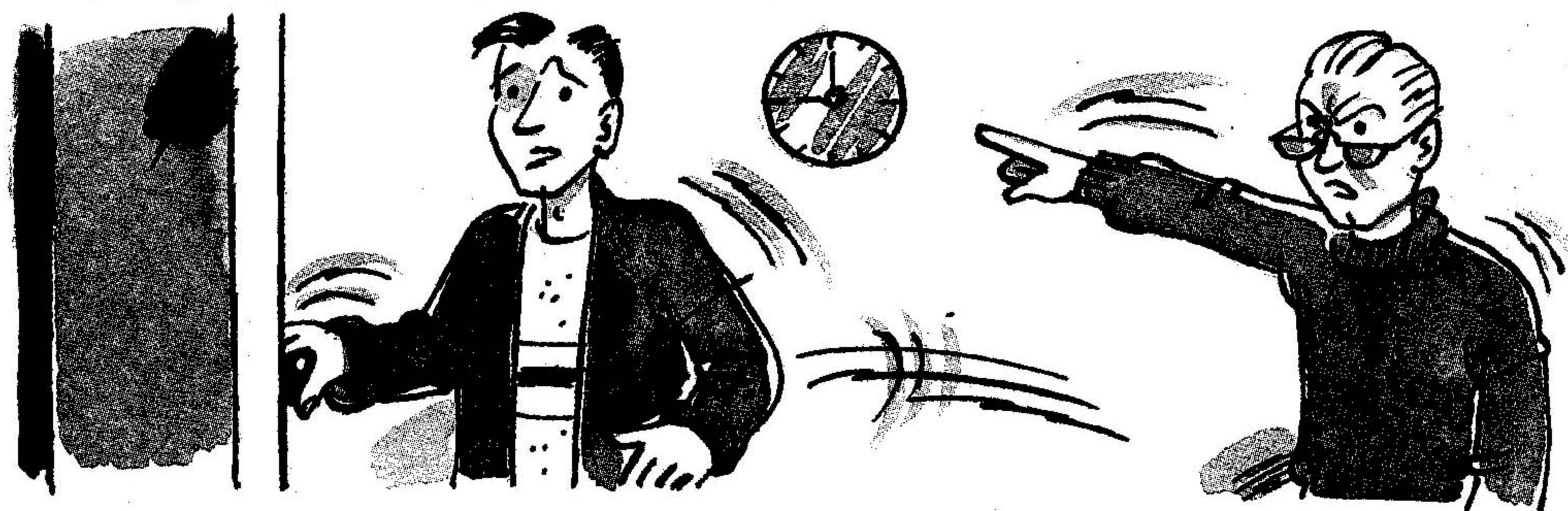
Conditionals can also be introduced by the following conjunctions:

unless	even if	if only	as/so long as	assuming(that)
on (the) condition (that)	provided/providing (that)			
In questions: suppose/supposing (that)		what if	imagine	

Practice

31 In your notebook, rewrite the sentences replacing *if* with the most appropriate conjunction.

- Mr Davidson says he'll come and give a talk at the conference if we pay him a reasonable fee.
 (supposing that / unless / on condition that)
Mr Davidson says he'll come and give a talk at the conference on condition that we pay him a reasonable fee.
- I won't help him if he doesn't ask me properly.
 (provided / unless / as long as)
- If I could get a job, life here would be perfect.
 (what if / even if / if only)
- If you had a lot of money, do you think you would give up work?
 (Supposing that / Providing that / As long as)
- If the train arrives on time, they'll be here in a few minutes.
 (What if / Assuming that / On condition that)
- If he doesn't agree to my request, what will I do then?
 (Imagine / What if / Provided that)



- You can go out tonight if you get back by midnight.
 (as long as / assuming that / supposing that)

- 8 If the helicopter hadn't been there to save her, what would have happened then?
(If only / Imagine / Unless)
- 9 If you'd offered to pay me a thousand pounds, I wouldn't have done it.
(If only / Provided that / Even if)
- 10 If Rosie gets this new promotion, we'll have enough money for a holiday abroad this year.
(Even if / Provided that / Supposing that)

32 Implied conditionals

Conditions are not always expressed in the form of conditional clauses, particularly in spoken English. They can be expressed in another way or they may be evident from the context:

Please come out with us tonight. I'm sure you'll enjoy it.
(implied condition: *if you come out with us*)

With a bit more help, I would have finished it on time.
(*with a bit more help* = if I had had more help)

I'm sure we'd really enjoy going on holiday with you but we just can't afford it.
(implied condition: *if we went*)

I'm glad you didn't tell Matthew about it. He would have been furious.
(implied condition: *if you had told him*)

Practice

- 32** The condition is not stated in a conditional clause in the following underlined sentences. It is implied or is stated in a different way. Write a sentence containing the underlined words as a main clause, and an appropriate conditional clause.

- 1 I think Alison should apply for the job. She would make a very good managing director.

She would make a very good managing director if she got the job.

- 2 The problem is that she doesn't work very hard. I know that she could do really well.

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- 3 We're lucky it's sunny today. It would be horrible sitting out here otherwise.

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4 He would not be able to live on his own without the help of his neighbours.

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5 With luck, we'll finish the job by the end of today.

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6 I hear you're thinking of going to Indonesia for the summer. You'll love it there.

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7 I hope those refugees aren't deported, but I think they will be. They may be imprisoned or even executed.

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8 It's a good job you brought all those tables and chairs in from outside last night. The rain would have ruined them.

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9 Mark should have told her the truth. I'm sure she would have forgiven him.

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10 Without the help of the Red Cross doctors, many more would have died.

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